

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

7-2-07

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instruction. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building

other names/site number: Cooper Lamp Building

**2. Location**

street and number: 2545 W. Diversey Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town: Chicago

N/A vicinity

state: Illinois

county: Cook County

zip code 60647-1938

**3. State/Federal/Tribal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.  
See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  
See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other. (explain:)

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing		Noncontributing		
1	0	0	0	buildings
0	0	0	0	sites
0	0	0	0	structures
0	0	0	0	objects
1	0	0	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction

**Historic Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Manufacturing Facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

**Current Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation	Concrete
Walls	Concrete
	Brick
Roof	Asphalt

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is

- A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry  
Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1913-1956

**Significant Dates**

1923  
1913

**Significant Person**

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Hallberg, Sr., Lawrence G.  
Hallberg, Jr., Lawrence G.

Name of Property  
Vassar Swiss Underwear Company

Cook County, IL

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository

Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis, MN

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property .50

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 16 442622E    3 (NAD27)

2 4642215N    4 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

Name of Property

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Jennifer Kenny and Victoria Granacki

organization: Granacki Historic Consultants

date: 1/10/2007

street & number: 1105 W, Chicago Avenue, Suite 201

telephone: (312) 421-1131

city or town: Chicago

state: Illinois

zip code: 60622-5772

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Baum Brothers LLC

street & number: 1030 West Chicago Avenue

telephone: (312) 275-3124

city or town: Chicago

state: Illinois

zip code: 60625-5671

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.* ).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Program Center, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington DC 20240; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Chicago, Cook County, IL**

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SUMMARY**

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building is a monumental loft industrial building with simplified classical detailing located in Chicago's Logan Square community area. The original 106x300x56 design by the Chicago architectural firm of L. G. Hallberg & Company was executed as a three-story plus basement factory building of brick with reinforced concrete, flat slab construction. In 1923-24 the plant was expanded with a three-story, 103'x 204' west addition also designed by L. G. Hallberg & Co. This industrial building with a tall tower was recognized in the 1971-75 Illinois Historic Structures Survey as a P-rated building or potentially individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

**LOCATION AND SETTING**

In 1913, the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company located its factory in the Logan Square neighborhood, situated approximately five miles north and west from Chicago's Loop. Logan Square, a northwest-side community area located between Diversey Avenue on the north, Bloomingdale Avenue on the south, Pulaski Avenue and the C.M. and S.P. Railroad on the west, and the north branch of the Chicago River on the east has always been served by major transportation routes. Two of Chicago's major north side thoroughfares, Milwaukee Avenue and Elston Avenue, run diagonally through the community. Also running diagonally is the highly-traversed Kennedy Expressway, or Interstate 90-94, that carries over 270,000 cars per day. Three railroad lines, the Chicago and Northwestern Railway that runs parallel to the Kennedy Expressway in Logan Square, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and its spur that skirts the western and southern edges of the community, and the Chicago Transit Authority's Blue Line (begun in 1892 as the Metropolitan West Side Elevated) helped shape land uses in the community. Along the C & NW and C. M. and St. P. tracks developed industrial uses while commercial uses were found along the community's major streets, particularly Milwaukee Avenue, and near the California and Logan Square stations on the elevated line. Industrial buildings are of both brick and reinforced concrete, and tend to be no more than four stories tall. The remainder of the community is residential,

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principally multifamily, however there are pockets of single-family residences in the western portion of the community that date to the decades shortly following the establishment of the elevated railroad line in 1892.

Like most of Chicago, the Logan Square neighborhood was laid out in a standard orthogonal grid. Adding interest to the neighborhood streetscape are Kedzie and Logan Boulevards, part of Chicago's 26 mile system of landscaped boulevards, with wide streets, broad lawns and parkways. Centered around the boulevards is a National Register of Historic Places district, as a well as a local district, encompassing landscape elements and approximately 400 buildings of high architectural quality from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most are residential, although a number of the neighborhood's grand religious structures are also included.

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company building is located in the northeast part of Logan Square, just to the east of the visually dividing Kennedy Expressway and adjacent railroad tracks. Like other early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings in the community, Vassar Swiss is found in an industrial corridor that hugs the railroad tracks, in this case, the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. At the time of construction, the building was just adjacent to the now demolished Maplewood Station, once the center of a former historic suburban residential community. Today, with the exception of the few commercial buildings along Diversey Avenue, much of the area surrounding the Vassar Swiss building is residential, with frame buildings that tend to be two to three stories in height. Because of its positioning amongst small scale residences, the brick and concrete Vassar Swiss Building and its tower have a commanding presence in the neighborhood.

Situated on a half-acre site on Diversey Avenue between Rockwell Avenue and Maplewood Avenue, the building's principal address is 2545 West Diversey Avenue, with secondary addresses of 2722-58 North Maplewood Avenue and 2743-57 North Rockwell Avenue. The building was constructed in two phases, a 367x180 foot building at the southwest corner of Diversey and Maplewood in 1913-14, followed by a west addition that extended the building to Rockwell Avenue in 1923-24.

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**EXTERIOR**

The 248,350 square foot, three-story and basement Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building is U-shaped in plan, with unequally long side wings that back up to the diagonal axis of the railroad embankment in the rear (south). The current principal façade, with thirteen bays, faces north on Diversey, while the longer of the side wings, with nineteen bays, faces east on Maplewood. The much shorter west-facing façade on Rockwell, with eight bays, contains the truck docks. There is a narrow, open courtyard in the rear with a one-story mechanical wing covering part of its footprint. Although the main structure was built in two phases, the two sections are indistinguishable in design and construction.

The concrete structural system of the Vassar Swiss Building is clearly expressed on the exterior, forming a grid pattern whose concrete vertical members are the dominant visual element. Rising from a low base, its vertical concrete posts are treated as pilasters, with geometrically simplified bases and capitals. Window bays are separated horizontally by courses of "enameled" brick outlined with concrete sills, at top and bottom. The brick parapet wraps continuously around the building and is topped with a simple concrete cornice. The corner bays of the structure have additional architectural detailing. These pilasters are wider, with Arts and Crafts-inspired capitals that pierce through the slightly elevated parapet. Small stone squares inset into the brick further mark these corner bays. When built, the exterior concrete was reportedly given a second coat of concrete composed of marble dust and ground glass, to achieve a decorative white marble effect. (Vassar Co. Concentrates. Textile Manufacturers Journal, March 21, 1914.)

Window bays originally had three grouped double hung sash with three over two window configurations at all four levels. At sidewalk level, basement windows are flush at the bottom with low concrete sills. On the interior, the basement floor is several feet below the window bottom. According to building permit records, the original windows were replaced in June 1946 and September 1947 with the current stacked metal hopper and awning sash alternating with glass block. There are a few extant examples of original windows in the building which were primarily wood, three over two sash, some double hung and some single hung with the upper sash an awning. There are



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some original metal, three over three double-hung sash near the fire escapes.

The tall square tower was built as part of the first (east) wing and is generally visible from all directions. Detailed similarly to the structure itself, the shaft of the tower has elongated concrete pilasters with simplified base and capitals with brick infill between them. A geometric concrete ornament marks the corners of each face, beneath a projecting stringcourse. The upper panel once held the clocks, but now has a flat surface where the name of the former lamp company is displayed. The tower is topped by a stepped parapet. This prominent and distinctive four story tower, designed to conceal a functional water tank, has been seen throughout the Logan Square neighborhood since 1913-14 and is highly visible to over 270,000 motorists traveling on the Kennedy expressway every day. When built, it was reported as rising 135 feet from ground level.

**INTERIOR**

The interior was designed for optimum functional utility. Its concrete skeletal form employs the flat slab mushroom system variant, with vast expanses of large round columns topped with flared capitals. This system, with its flat ceiling uninterrupted by cross girders, allows for easy installation of unbroken mechanical conduit, pipes, and ducts. Wood strip flooring was laid atop the concrete floor substructure and still exists in many areas. The main entrance on Diversey has concrete-finish walls and floor, and a utilitarian staircase with a simple iron railing and newel posts. Although the basement floor is several feet below grade, it has a full height ceiling and looks like the upper floors.

When first built in 1913-14, all factory functions were housed in the original L-shaped wing at the southwest corner of Diversey Avenue and Maplewood. After the addition was constructed to the west in 1923-24, Sanborn Insurance Maps show the following functions: all knitting and winding functions were on the third floor of the original building, finishing on the second, and the stock room, packing and shipping on the first. The smaller "L" portion of the original building, which then connected it to the west addition, housed the main office on the first floor, inspecting and boxing on the second, cutting on the third, and employee service rooms such as the restaurant and locker

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areas were in the basement. The entire west addition was utilized for a paper box factory. A small one-story, brick projection in the rear, original to the building, was for a dry cleaning plant. When the building was constructed, it had its own power plant, sprinkler system, and two Otis freight elevators.

**INTEGRITY**

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building possesses much of its original integrity. The exterior structural system with its distinctive applied concrete and brick architectural detailing remains in place and in excellent condition. The distinctive tower displays most of its original design integrity, but for the removal of the four clock faces at the top. On the interior, the flat slab mushroom system is visible, and the original staircases remain in place. From available historic materials, no significant interior spaces were found. Although most of the original windows were replaced, the original configuration can be identified from remaining extant windows, permitting a recreation of the complete historic appearance of the exterior.

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**SUMMARY**

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building is locally eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A for its associations with Chicago's Vassar Swiss Underwear Company and its successor, Munsingwear, Inc. a pioneering, nationally-known brand and leading U. S. producer of men's knit underwear. Vassar Swiss was established at a time when Chicago was the nation's second largest men's clothing production center and operated at this site for over 50 years. The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company building, through its historic associations with this nationally important and pioneering knit good manufacturer, exemplifies the importance of manufacturing to the economic history of Chicago and the Logan Square neighborhood.

Built in 1913-14, the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building is also eligible under criteria C for architecture, as an early and significant example of flat slab, reinforced concrete loft-type construction, which became the preferred industrial building type after 1900. Additionally, the building reflects architectural experimentation in early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial building design when pioneering achievements in concrete engineering challenged Chicago architects to create improved, innovative and eye-catching industrial building designs. Architect Lawrence G. Hallberg, Sr.'s simplified, modern, yet classically derived wall treatments and decorative elements are successfully integrated into a building with modern proportions and materials.

**THE HISTORY OF THE VASSAR SWISS UNDERWEAR COMPANY**

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company was incorporated in Chicago on March 15, 1900 by George E. Rutledge, Emil A. Basener, and Frederick S. McCoy (New Incorporations, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 16, 1900, p. 10). With \$10,000 in capital, the company's founders entered the men's knit goods industry at a time when the city had become the United States' second largest production center for men's clothing (*Encyclopedia of Chicago*, p. 176).

Vassar Swiss produced high quality undergarments, particularly men's union suits. A

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union suit is a one-piece knitted undergarment that consists of a sleeved undershirt and underpants with a drop flap in the back. The union suit's beginnings can be traced to pioneering underwear company Bradley, Voorhees and Day (BVD), founded in 1876 in New York (Griffin, p. 29). As a maker of women's bustles, BVD wanted to diversify their product line and began manufacturing a new type of men's underwear. The union suit was popular because it was form fitting and had tremendous insulating properties. Some believe it was named because it joined upper and lower undergarments for the first time.

Aware of the growing popularity of this type of knitted underwear, George E. Rutledge, president of the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company, experimented with its design. In 1900 he obtained a patent on the union suit and engineered special machinery that aided and furthered efficient production. Rutledge's design improved the union suit by reinforcing portions of the garment that were subject to increased wear such as the underarms and inner thighs, with a closer knit than the open knit used for the rest of the garment. Most manufacturers were using additional fabric that caused the suit to become bulky and uncomfortable. Additionally, he improved the method of sleeve attachment to lower costs of the suit's production (Patent 663,517, December 11, 1900. United States Patents and Trademarks Office. Patent Full-Text and Full-Page Image Databases. <http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html>).

Although first located in Chicago, the company's factory was moved in 1903. To avoid labor union troubles, they relocated to the Ogle County, Illinois town of Rochelle, approximately 80 miles west of Chicago ("Moves to Avoid Unions." *Chicago Daily Tribune*. August 5, 1903, p. 4.). At the time, Vassar Swiss employed 100 to 150 women in Chicago and was controlled by employees of department store Marshall Field & Company, the principal seller of Vassar Swiss produced goods. After attaining \$22,000 in incentives to move to Rochelle, the factory was located on the former site of the Rochelle Fairgrounds near the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad tracks. In its 12 years in Rochelle, the company became successful enough to attract the attention of the Northwestern Knitting Company of Minneapolis, then one of the largest U.S. producers of union suits. Northwestern Knitting Company, founded in 1886 and known by 1919 as underwear giant Munsingwear, purchased the company in 1912. Shortly after the Vassar Swiss purchase, the decision was made to move back to Chicago and

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build a new factory. The vacated Rochelle plant was then sold to the Caron Spinning Company, maker of yarns, in 1915 (Kruger, Franklin. *Bits of Rochelle Area History*. Rockford, IL: Adams Letter Services, 2004, p. 14).

By teaming up with Northwestern Knitting Company, the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company was jolted into large-scale production. With the help of real estate developer Stewart Hodges, who specialized in building factories, a new Chicago site was chosen and property purchased in July 1913 for the established and growing company. At the southwest corner of Diversey and Maplewood avenues, the location was conveniently adjacent to the Maplewood Station along the Chicago, and Northwestern Railway in the Logan Square community area of Chicago. Hodges secured the land, vacated the alleys, got a rail switch track and even selected his father-in-law, architect Lawrence Gustav Hallberg, Sr., to design the new factory building. Hallberg was well respected in Chicago for his innovations in the application of reinforced concrete, particularly in industrial building design. The design by L. G. Hallberg & Company called for a three-story plus basement factory building of reinforced concrete, flat slab construction. On September 25, 1913, a building permit (#16987) was issued for a 160x300x56 factory building at a cost of \$325,000. On April 16, 1914, a final building report was issued for the new mill.

The November 1913 issue of the *Monthly Bulletin of the Chicago and North Western Line* reported the new location of the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company:

"We have secured the location at Maplewood Station, Chicago, of what, it is said, will be the finest knitting mill in the world. This mill, when completed, will occupy the entire block bounded by Diversey Boulevard, Maplewood Avenue, Rockwell Street, and the North Western right-of-way. A spur track from our line will accommodate this plant. It will be four stories high, each story containing about an acre and a half of floor space. The first section is now well along in construction, and will have a total of about four acres of floor space. The building is of steel and reinforced concrete, with exterior of marbled columns and brick of the same kind as used in the fine Blackstone Hotel building, Chicago. An illuminated clock tower will rise four stories above the roof, containing a four-dial clock with thirteen-foot faces. The mill will have its own power plant,

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furnishing all the power and light used in the building. In addition to the main building, there will be coal storage, laboratories, and garage for motor trucks. From 800 to 1,000 people will be employed, and, for their comfort, restaurants, reading rooms, and rest rooms will be provided. The production of the mill will be confined entirely to "Vassar Swiss Ribbed Union Suits for Gentlemen," which are sold to practically every high class furnishing goods store in the United States." ("Knitting Mill is Secured for the Chicago and Northwestern Line." *Chicago and Northwestern Line Monthly Bulletin*. Vol.2, no. 3, p. 25. In the Munsingwear Corporate Records, Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis, MN)

Vassar Swiss, whose motto was "Comfort to the Wearer," produced a knit garment at the new plant that was highly touted in its advertisements. Their union suits had "greater elasticity than any other knit underwear," had greater "fitting quality" since it was "knit to shape," had "knit-on seamless cuffs and ankles," and "flat, selvage-edge seams, not heavy, hard seams" (Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 30, 1913, p. 14). Advertising and sales played a key role in the company's success. By May 1916, Northwestern Knitting and Vassar Swiss established a sales office and New York to promote their products (Daily Trade Record, New York, May 16, 1916).

The arrangement with Northwestern Knitting Company proved highly successful. George Rutledge, who became a vice-president of Northwestern, joined up with Frank Chatfield, who held 133 patents for Northwestern Knitting. Rutledge and Chatfield created a patent modification of the union suit that "made economical use of knit goods and improved methods of production" (Anderson, Winter 1986, pp. 161).

In 1923-24 the prosperous Vassar Swiss Underwear Company expanded with a three-story, \$200,000 103'x 204' west addition also designed by L. G. Hallberg & Co. A building permit was issued on October 31, 1923 and the addition was completed by February 1924. It was built to house all shipping interests, including their paper box factory that was critical to product distribution. Furthermore, the new addition was to house the sales and promotional offices of another Munsingwear subsidiary, the Wayne Knitting Mills. The offices of the hosiery company were moved from the headquarters in Ft. Wayne, IN to the Diversey Avenue addition in order to be close to Chicago's trade

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center ("2 Wayne Knit Offices to Move to Chicago." Fort Wayne (IN) Journal, March 26, 1924). A decade later, all offices of Wayne Knitting Mills were moved to Chicago, leaving just the manufacturing interests in Ft. Wayne.

The 1910s and 1920s were very profitable for Vassar Swiss. In 1914, shortly after opening the plant in Chicago, annual sales were reported at \$387,340, reaching \$1,951,430 by 1921 and accelerating to \$3,104,772 by 1926. To keep labor costs low, Vassar Swiss established branches outside of Chicago in the 1920s. In DeKalb, IL, an old Armory building housed their athletic underwear department while Three Rivers, MI was home to cut and sewn knitted garments.

The following decade brought additional changes to Vassar Swiss. One major change occurred in its name—Vassar Swiss Underwear Company was shortened to the Vassar Company in July 1934, likely due to changes in its product lines. Their principal product, the union suit, was soon to be replaced by the more supportive and comfortable brief, first introduced by competitor Cooper Underwear Company (later Jockey) at Chicago's Marshall Field & Company in January 1935. Vassar began making slip over shirts and "track pants" to diversify their line. Vassar purchased their Logan Square property outright from Stewart Hodges after having leased the building since its construction. Furthermore, a shift occurred in company leadership. Founder and creative chief George E. Rutledge (b. 1880, Missouri—d. December 24, 1962, Chicago, IL) retired as president of Vassar Swiss and Munsingwear, Inc. in 1937 after serving five years in that role.

Although another name change was introduced in 1951, when Vassar Co. merged into Munsingwear to become the Vassar division of Munsingwear. Operations still continued at the Diversey Avenue location. By 1958 the Vassar Division, which by the 1950s had only produced girdles, was completely integrated with Munsingwear's Hollywood-Maxwell Company to form the Hollywood-Vassarette Division. This division combined knitted Vassar fabrics with Hollywood bras. For over 53 years, Vassar Swiss and Munsingwear's associate companies occupied the approximately 270,000 square foot structure. It was sold in 1967 to Frederick Cooper Lamps following Munsingwear's relocation to Paris, TX. Cooper Lamp vacated the property in August 2005.

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**LOGAN SQUARE AND ITS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (1880s-1930)**

The Logan Square neighborhood, where the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company located its factory in 1913, dates to 1836 and 1838 when the first public domain purchases were made of the area's level prairie (Illinois Public Domain Land Tract Sales Database). Land was cultivated by farmers whose principal product was cut hay. When the North West Plank Road (Milwaukee Avenue) was laid out in 1850 from Kinzie Street to Deerfield Township, farmers in what became known as Jefferson Township had a direct road to the markets. Further settlement occurred when neighborhood lands were annexed piecemeal between 1853 and 1889 to the City of Chicago. Improvements such as an 1869 park and boulevard system creating Humboldt, Kedzie and Logan Boulevards, combined with street car lines, an elevated railway, and major railroads such as the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and the Chicago and Northwestern Railway greatly contributed to late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century development in Logan Square.

When the Chicago and Northwestern Railway opened the Maplewood station in 1870 at today's intersection of Diversey and Rockwell, a new Chicago railroad suburb was born. On property originally purchased from the government by George and Maria Adams in November 1838, real estate developers Wing and Farlin obtained the west half of the southeast quarter in Section 25 in February 1869 and began subdividing and selling off lots (Chamberlain, 439-442). At Maplewood, trees were planted, an artesian well water supply was captured, a post office established by 1872, a school was constructed, and homes were built costing \$2,000 to \$6,500. Many residents had arrived in Maplewood shortly after the Chicago Fire of 1871, where moderately priced frame homes could be built outside of the city's fire limits. By 1874, nine Chicago and Northwestern trains stopped at the depot at Maplewood daily (Chamberlain, 440). By the following decade, there were eight stores, three churches, and 6,000 inhabitants in Maplewood (Andreas, 758). This suburban railroad community was eventually annexed to the city, along with the rest of Logan Square, by 1889.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century the majority of Logan Square residents were working class immigrants. Swedes, Danes, and Germans built and occupied frame



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single family homes and two-flats in close proximity to industries that had located in the Logan Square area. Early industrial development in the community was found in corridors hugging Elston Avenue (strategically located between the Chicago and Northwestern Railway tracks and the North Branch of the Chicago River); along the Chicago and Northwestern Railway tracks that cut diagonally through the northeast portion of the community area; and along the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad tracks that ran on a diagonal through the southwest portion of the community area and another line that ran east to west at Bloomingdale Avenue. Industries along the North Branch of the Chicago River were mainly brickyards, which harvested from adjacent clay pits, and lumber industries that built mills utilizing water transit for distribution (Sanborn Insurance Map, Volume 10, 1896, 1921). Industries attracted to properties along the railroad tracks varied and included garment companies, breweries, varnish manufacturers, coal yards, and tanneries. The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company is one of the principal manufacturers that located adjacent to the Chicago and Northwestern Railway tracks in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Logan Square.

The industrial development of the Logan Square community area is represented by a small number of historic manufacturing buildings that remain in the community's industrial corridors, including the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building. In recent years, a number of industrial buildings have been razed for commercial redevelopments along Elston Avenue, or have been adaptively reused. Seven manufacturing buildings in the Logan Square community area were rated orange for their architectural or historical significance in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. In 2006, three have been demolished and only four are still standing:

- Brand Brewing Company, 2530-32 N. Elston Avenue, Romanesque Revival manufacturing building, orange-rated, IHSS P-rated, 1880s (vacant, north side arch has been removed)
- Chicago Printed String Company, 2300 W. Logan Boulevard, manufacturing building, orange-rated, Alfred Alschuler, architect, 1928 (vacant)
- Borden Farm Products, 2825 N. Washtenaw Avenue, Craftsman style manufacturing building, orange-rated, IHSS, Eben E. Roberts, architect, 1924 (adapted for residential use, very little historic fabric remaining)

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W. S. Tothill Swing Factory, 1809 W. Webster Avenue, manufacturing building, orange-rated, 1880s (currently a picture framing business, now with window and door alterations)

Today, the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company building remains as one of the few remaining, and most prominent manufacturing buildings associated with early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial history in Chicago's north side Logan Square community area.

**INDUSTRIAL BUILDING DESIGN IN CHICAGO**

Chicago has a legacy of historic factory buildings dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> century coincident with its emergence as a major U.S. manufacturing center. The factory building type was first created after 1800 when manufacturing shifted away from individual artisans laboring in small workshops to a process that involved a series of large, task-related machines used to create a single product. This introduced the need for special purpose structures designed and built just for industry. As industrialization progressed, the factory building combined the functional and economic requirements of factory management in assembly lines, standardization, and production efficiency with new architectural design and construction types. Among these evolving types, the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building is defined as a multi-story industrial loft building.

LOFT

The loft is the most common industrial building type and is generally rectangular, with load-bearing or window walls and a flat roof. These multi-story structures are supported by one of several types of construction - standard mill timber frame, reinforced concrete post and beam, or steel skeleton construction. The loft is multi-purpose and can be used for manufacturing and assembly operations, materials storage, office and support functions, machine shop and equipment repair, and a variety of other industry-specific uses.

The loft evolved from a need for larger spaces and well-supported floors for machinery. Textile mills were the first to turn to tall, multi-story factory structures. Known as standard mill construction, these early lofts had a framework of heavy wood columns

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supporting timber beams, and small wood, double hung windows penetrating thick masonry exterior walls. Wood plank sub-floors were laid flat with wood strip finished flooring laid either crosswise or diagonally. A flat roof had tar/asphalt and gravel. Variations on standard mill construction can include cast iron columns on the lower floors for strength, steel beams tied into timber posts, or floor planks laid on edge. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, uniform, rectangular brick and timber frame mill structures had become the norm for many industries.

Reinforced concrete became the primary structural material for multi-story loft construction after 1900 (although some timber frame construction continued to be built into the 1910s). This material permitted a structural skeleton with wide areas between columns to be filled with windows for maximum daylight. Structures of concrete were more fire-resistant, less susceptible to vibration, cleaner and safer than wood or load-bearing brick. Raw materials for this type of construction (sand, aggregate, and cement) were readily available.

Reinforced concrete construction, as found in the Vassar Swiss building, is characterized by a framework of concrete columns and beams forming a grid that provides the entire structural support for the building. Freed from load-bearing, exterior walls could be curtain walls with large expanses of windows. Traditional double hung sash were still employed although multi-light steel sash were favored for providing more light and ventilation. Typical window configurations included operable center pivot, awning, or hopper sections that opened with rods or pull chains. Ceilings were characteristically 12-14 feet tall and the structures had flat roofs similar to mill construction.

Two variations of reinforced concrete construction were employed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: beam and girder construction and flat slab construction. Beam and girder comprises a network of concrete columns and crossbeams, sometimes with additional girders between the beams, supporting a concrete or hollow tile floor. Flat slab construction, as seen in Vassar Swiss, features wide, usually round columns having flared tops that support broad, flat, concrete plates. These columns and plates in turn support a reinforced concrete floor slab of uniform thickness with no dropped beams.

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This became the preferred method after 1920 because it permitted easy installation of uninterrupted conduit and ducts along the ceilings.

The first American patents in reinforced concrete construction were attained in the late 1860s. In 1875, the first successful reinforced concrete building was constructed by engineer William Ward in Port Chester, New York. Experiments by engineers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century furthered the use of reinforced concrete. French engineer Francois Hennebique patented early prefabricated systems; San Francisco engineer Ernest L. Ransome conducted groundbreaking work with twisted reinforcing rods and a 1902 patented skeletal form of reinforced concrete construction; and Minneapolis engineer C.A.P. Turner led innovations in flat slab floor construction. Pioneering achievements in concrete engineering challenged Chicago architects to create improved, innovative and eye-catching industrial building designs.

Lawrence Gustav Hallberg's design for the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company is a factory loft with reinforced concrete, flat slab construction. Hallberg's late-career factory designs, as this was, were mainly of reinforced concrete loft construction chosen for its fireproof, strength, and vibration-free qualities. For Vassar Swiss, he chose the "Mushroom System" of flat slab construction, first developed by civil engineer Claude A. P. Turner around 1905 and published in *Western Architect* in May 1907. The "Mushroom System" embedded reinforcing bars in the floor slabs, extending from column to column. The structural system named for the flared shape of the concrete column heads that spread the weight of the floors is readily apparent throughout the building.

From a design perspective, reinforced concrete loft structures built between 1900 and 1930 displayed a remarkable uniformity on both the exterior and interior. They shared the same rectangular shape, exposed concrete skeleton, minimal ornament, repeated interior bays, and expansive window walls. Because of this standardization, lofts were often utilitarian structures designed by engineers, without benefit of an architect. Lesser-known firms borrowed the new technology from trade publications and offered their services to economy-minded industrialists. Yet, a handful of architects, including those based in Chicago, brought attention to refining techniques in reinforced concrete

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construction and inserted architectural interest into what had once been featureless construction.

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago architects such as Alfred Alschuler, George C. Nimmons, Howard Van Doren Shaw, and Richard Schmidt are recognized for having forwarded the industrial factory from earlier featureless structures to aesthetically pleasing designs. Better industrial buildings of this era in Chicago reflect experimentation with wall treatments and decorative elements either by integrating dramatic decorative detailing based on past historic styles or by expressing modernity in proportional designs with simplified ornamentation.

When Hallberg designed the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company building in Chicago, he successfully executed a design with detailing that interpreted historic elements in a modern way, and set the building apart from many other reinforced concrete factory designs of the period. His interpretation of concrete pilasters topped with modern ornamental capitals stimulates visual interest in what would have been an ordinary skeletal frame. Projecting from the façade of the building beyond the window plane these vertical elements also de-emphasize the building's extensive length. This solved a visual challenge in the Vassar Swiss Building, like many other loft buildings, whose length was dictated by the size of the operation, the limitations of mechanical power distribution, and the extent of the area that could be effectively supervised. Hallberg's other accomplishments in this design include skillful, elaborate corner treatments, the addition of a decorative coating to the concrete in order to give it marble-like properties. a seamless building addition in 1923-24, and an impressive tower that shares similar detailing with the loft building.

**THE FACTORY TOWER**

Many of Chicago's most prominent industrial buildings of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries shared a common feature: a distinctive, soaring tower. Rising from the heart of the factory, its tower was symbolic of an industry's prosperity and prominence in its community, yet was also functional. Almost always of masonry, the factory tower was square in plan and highly decorative, housing company bells and whistles, clock faces, stairs, and water tanks that fed into gravity driven sprinkler systems used for fire protection. Towers were often integral to a factory's functional design, emphasizing

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main entries or prominent corners, or aesthetically transforming a long façade.

Factory towers first appeared as standard elements of textile mill architecture. Although initially driven by pragmatism and profit motives, a factory with a rising tower was also symbolic of the mill's dominant role in a new industrial society. The need for fire-resistant construction in factory design prompted the creation of water tanks and towers which became vital in fire protection. The first were in freestanding stair towers that were abutted against the factory façade, followed by the increasing use of the rooftop water tank for automatic sprinkler systems in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The well-crafted masonry tower protected the water tank itself from wind, weather, and even fire. In a city where fire protection concerns transformed building design and construction after the Great Fire of 1871, it is easy to understand how factory towers began to dominate Chicago's urban landscape.

Gifted early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chicago architects who designed manufacturing buildings viewed the tower as an inspiring and essential element in factory design. Industrial architects including George Nimmons and Alfred Alschuler maximized the design of the functional masonry tower by incorporating stylistic elements into its facades, capping the tower with exquisite detailing, emphasizing its verticality and capitalizing on its commanding presence. Similarly, Hallberg's high-reaching tower for Vassar Swiss became a signature feature for the company. The massive masonry tower of brick, concrete, and terra cotta protected the factory's water tank in a highly decorative form. Although the clock faces have been removed, the square tower retains all of its original detailing. Classically derived with simplified geometries that give it an Arts and Crafts feel, the tower shaft features inset brick highlighting concrete pilasters that rise from its massive concrete base, decorative vents with vertical rectilinear elements, and geometric concrete moldings that appear to drip from the cornice. The tower is capped with terra cotta facing and parapet concealing its flat roof. Designed as a symbol of the industry's prominence in the Logan Square community, and summoning its employees to work, today it is visible to over 279,300 cars daily on the Kennedy Expressway.

**ARCHITECT OF VASSAR SWISS UNDERWEAR COMPANY: L. G. Hallberg & Company: Lawrence Gustave Hallberg, Sr. and Lawrence Gustave Hallberg, Jr.**

Lawrence Gustave Hallberg, Sr., FAIA, was one of the earliest among very few

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architects in Chicago who specialized in industrial building design in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Practicing in Chicago and Evanston, Hallberg (b. September 4, 1844, Wenersnas, Sweden—d. December 4, 1915, Chicago, IL) is highly regarded for his early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial designs, particularly in the innovative application of reinforced concrete. Hallberg, Sr. was an innovator in factory design and construction and held patents for both fireproof flooring (No. 659,965, patented October 16, 1900) and in a type of reinforced concrete foundation (No. 659, 967, patented October 16, 1900), both applicable to manufacturing facilities. Although Hallberg's chief work was in reinforced concrete warehouses and factories, he also did residential and some institutional and church designs. Many of his clients came through his contacts in the Swedish community.

Swedish born and educated, Hallberg graduated from Chalmers Polytechnic Institute of Gottenborg in 1866. After beginning the practice of architecture in London, England under Sir Digby Watts and traveling throughout Europe, he came to the United States in 1871 where his career blossomed. He settled in Chicago at a time when architects were in high demand to rebuild the city following the Great Chicago Fire. He established his own firm, but was briefly associated with Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate Meyer S. Strum (March 1900-March 1902). Professionally, he was a fellow of the American Institute of Architects (member 1884, admitted to fellowship in 1889), the Western Society of Engineers, the Chicago Real Estate Board, and Chicago Association of Commerce. In October 1881, he married Florence P. Estey and had four children: Mrs. Margaret Hallberg Rankin, Mrs. Marie Hallberg Hodges, Lawrence Gustav Hallberg, Jr. and Norman D'Este Hallberg. His son, Lawrence, Jr., joined his firm in May 1913 and took over the practice following his father's death two years later.

Lawrence Gustave Hallberg, Jr. (b. December 27, 1887, Chicago, IL —d. May, 1971, Barrington, IL) received an architecture degree from Cornell University in 1910, and shortly after joined his father's practice, L. G. Hallberg & Company. Like his father, he was a member of the American Institute of Architects and the Chicago Real Estate Board. In 1916, he designed a home for himself at 1005 Sheridan Road in Evanston. By 1931, he had also retained a home in Barrington, IL and died in that community in 1971.

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Many of the elder Hallberg's clients came through his contacts in the Swedish community, for whom he designed institutional buildings and churches. These designs include Old Main at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois (begun 1884), the Swedish Mission Church on 59<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago (1898), Lake View Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church (1898), Augustana Hospital, Cleveland Street Chicago (1903), and the Swedish American Hospital Association, Chicago, and the Swedish Theological Seminary on Orrington Street in Evanston (ca. 1907).

However, Hallberg's chief work was in reinforced concrete warehouses and factories (Obituary, Journal of the A. I. A., 1916, p. 122.) Hallberg was one of a number of Chicago architects who specialized in manufacturing design, but has not been recognized as a master like contemporary architects Alfred S. Alschuler, George C. Nimmons, and Holabird & Roche. Many of Hallberg, Sr.'s designs for factory buildings were collaborations with his son-in-law, real estate developer Stewart Cornwall Hodges. Stewart Hodges married Lawrence Hallberg, Sr.'s daughter, Marie Josephine, on April 4, 1904 at the Hallberg family home in Evanston known as "Elfberg." The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building, Comptograph Company Building at 1714-1724 N. Marshfield Avenue (1911); and Fischer Furniture Company Building, 1144-46 West Kinzie (1912) all were efforts by Hodges and Hallberg.

Considered L. G. Hallberg & Company's largest and best-known industrial work was for the Stewart-Warner Speedometer Corporation, once located at 1828-1836 West Diversey Avenue on Chicago's north side. The complex of buildings evolved from its first Hallberg-designed building constructed in 1906 for what was then known as the Stewart and Clark Manufacturing Company. Architects L.G. Hallberg and Company continued their associations with the vehicle instrument company throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1918, Hallberg & Company had produced designs for seven buildings, ranging from a one-story sawtooth roofed building to a six-story warehouse building of reinforced concrete construction ("The Stewart-Warner Speedometer Corporation: L. G. Hallberg & Company, architects." *American Architect*, February 27, 1918, p. 262). The Stewart-Warner works, with its Gothic Revival inspired design and soaring tower that was once a visual landmark in the Lake View and North Center communities, was demolished in 1994.



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Lawrence G. Hallberg, Sr. considered himself an innovator in factory design and construction in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (*The Book of Chicagoans*, 1911, p. 295). The architect held patents for both fireproof flooring (No. 659,965, patented October 16, 1900) and in a type of reinforced concrete foundation (No. 659, 967, patented October 16, 1900), both applicable to manufacturing facilities. It is unknown if he held other patents before his death in 1915. Hallberg's interest in factory design likely began early in his career. Twenty examples of the firm's industrial work were found using a number of sources including the American Contractor's Chicago Building Permit Column database (1898-1912); the Proquest Chicago Tribune Historical Archive; Chicago Historic Resources Survey, and The American Architect Database available through APS Online. A table of the firm's industrial work is found below:

Street	Street	Building name	Date
	Blackhawk at Cherry	Ames & Frost Building	1883
912-920 W(old address: 201-209)	20th st. (Cullerton Av.)	Foster Munger Co.	1904
400-408 (old address:193-199)	Peoria Street (and West Van Buren Street)	Addressograph Company	1904
SW corner	Ontario St. near LaSalle St.	Chicago Flexible Shaft Company Building	1906
600 block (even side) old address: 14-21	Hobbie st.	Wilder & Co.	1906
3706-3724	Filmore Street near Douglas Blvd.	Price Baking Company Building	1906
1013-1021 W	35th st.	Dearborn Drug & Chemical Co.	1906
961-967 W (old address: 242-246)	20th st. (Cullerton Av.)	Chicago Mill Supply Co.	1907

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160-172 S (old address: 012-022)	Green st.	Charles Allis	1907
(old address) 589-599 S	Paulina st.	Mackie & Lovejoy	1907
1201-1207	Jackson bd., s.w. cor. of Center av. (Racine av.)	Regensteiner Colortype Company/C(harles).C. Heisen	1909
1714-1724 N	Marshfield av.	Hallberg & Hodges (Comptograph Co. - Adding Machines)/now Marshfield Park	1911
325 N	Wells Street	John Moir Trust Building	1912 (conversion and addition 1984, Booth Hansen Associates)
1144-1146 W	Kinzie st.	S. Hodges (Fischer Furniture Company)	1912
3021	Carroll av.	Chicago Shipping & Recpt. Bk. Co	1912
1713-1715, 1717-1733 N (old address: 856-872)	Paulina st.	Felt & Tarrant Mfg. Co. - adding machines/now Pac Lofts	1906, 1911
817-825 (old address 196-200)	Washington bd.	Kohler Die & Specialty Co.	1907, 1912
990 (old address 432-442)	Fullerton av.	Eugene Dietzgen Co./Dietzgen Eugene Company Building I	1906 (with additions in 1929 and 1941 by other architects)
1828-1836 (old address 502-504, 514-516); also 1829-1845 Wolfram St.	Diversey bd.	Stewart & Clark Mfg. Co./Stewart-Warner Speedometer Corporation Building	1906, 1907, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1918, demolished

Upon recent inspection, 14 designs are still standing and three have been demolished, while the status of three others are unknown. Several of these are early standard mill construction, while the majority are reinforced concrete construction with decorative

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face brick concealing the structural system in many examples. In no other known design is the structural concrete system integrated so well into the architectural design features as with the Vassar Swiss Building.

**CONCLUSION**

The monumental four-story Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building with its distinctive tower rising emphatically over the Kennedy Expressway and Logan Square community embodies an important part of Chicago's early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial history and urban landscape. The city's transportation corridors and planned manufacturing districts were once lined with numerous examples of sturdy and well-engineered factory buildings constructed with efficient, well lit, and ventilated work spaces for its employees. Industrial buildings such as the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building are reminders of the city's manufacturing dominance and reflect the city's innovations and refinements in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial architecture and engineering.

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company was a leading producer of men's knit goods throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When it was incorporated in 1900 by president George E. Rutledge, Chicago was the nation's second largest men's clothing production center. Vassar Swiss and its successor company, Munsingwear, Inc., were pioneers in the mass production of high quality men's underwear, particularly the union suit, under familiar and nationally advertised brand names. For over 53 years until it was sold in 1967, underwear giant Munsingwear and its associate companies, including Hollywood Vassarette, occupied the approximately 270,000 square foot structure on Diversey Avenue.

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company building is one of the few remaining manufacturing buildings associated with early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial history in Chicago's north side Logan Square community area. Real estate developer Stewart Hodges chose an advantageous site conveniently adjacent to the Maplewood Station of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. The imposing factory structure still sits well amongst its residential neighbors to its north and east. Railroad tracks at its back door are evidence of the vital role this transportation mode played in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for

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the movement of goods and personnel.

Built in 1913-14, the Vassar Swiss Underwear Building is an early and excellent example of flat slab, reinforced concrete, loft-type construction, which became the preferred industrial type after 1900. Collaboration between architect Lawrence Gustav Hallberg, Sr., an innovator in reinforced concrete construction, and his son-in-law Stewart Hodges, who specialized in building factories, produced an impressive design. The exposed concrete structural frame is a pure expression of its construction type, yet stylized architectural features set it apart from strictly utilitarian structures. Outstanding detailing with modernized references to traditional styles highlights the competence of an architect who was one of Chicago's earliest producers of modern loft designs. In 1923-24, L. G. Hallberg & Company expanded the prosperous Vassar Swiss Underwear Company's building with an airy and seamless west addition, establishing the monumentality it retains today.

The imposing brick and concrete tower of the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building was created by an architect who viewed towers as inspiring and essential elements in factory design. While concealing the water tank that was essential to the building's fire protection sprinkler system, the tower also became a signature feature. Hallberg incorporated stylized traditional design elements into its facades, emphasizing its verticality, and capitalizing on its commanding presence. Soaring over the Logan Square neighborhood when it was first built, today it is highly visible to the 270,000 motorists traveling daily on the Kennedy Expressway.

The Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building is representative of early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial architecture in Chicago. With an exposed frame reinforced concrete loft design, the building falls within a period when Chicago architects explored modern technologies, refined techniques, and added visual interest when executing concrete utilitarian designs. Some of the early proponents of this modern material and its technologies designed factory buildings that were standardized and highly functional, with exteriors that simply expressed their functional nature. Yet, architect L.G. Hallberg's 1913-14 design for the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company building with extra attention to aesthetics, clearly distinguishes this architectural design apart from other strictly utilitarian structures of the period.

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Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased).* Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970, p. 258.

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National Park Service**

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**Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Chicago, Cook County, IL**

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property Index Number: 13-25-404-001-0000

Legal description:

Lots 1 to 13, both inclusive, Lots 26 to 34, both inclusive, and the vacated alley running north and south lying between lots 1 to 12 and 26 to 34, and also the vacated alley lying south of and adjoining said north and south vacated alley and south of lots 12, 13, 26, 27 and 28 and adjoining said lots, and the right of way of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad in Block 17 in Albert Crosby's subdivision of the East ½ of the Southeast ¼ of Section 25, Township 40 North, Range 13 East of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Principal Meridian in Cook County, Illinois.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the building and the property known commonly as 2545 West Diversey Avenue, 2722-58 North Maplewood Avenue, and 2743-57 North Rockwell Avenue.

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Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Chicago, Cook County, IL

PHOTOGRAPH LIST

IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding001.tif	East and north (front) facades
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding002.tif	Detail, east and north (front) facades
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding003.tif	Northeast corner
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding004.tif	North (front) façade on Diversey Avenue, looking southeast
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding005.tif	Detail, east façade on Maplewood Avenue, looking west
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding006.tif	East façade on Maplewood Avenue, looking southwest
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding007.tif	East façade on Maplewood Avenue, looking northwest
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding008.tif	West façade on Rockwell Avenue, looking southeast
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding009.tif	West façade on Rockwell Avenue, looking southeast
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding010.tif	South façade and courtyard, looking northwest from Kennedy Expressway (I-90/94)
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding011.tif	South façade and courtyard, looking north from Kennedy Expressway (I-90/94)
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding012.tif	Detail, courtyard, looking north from Kennedy Expressway (I-90/94)
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding013.tif	Detail, South façade, original wing, looking north from Kennedy Expressway (I-90/94)
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding014.tif	Southeast corner

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Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Chicago, Cook County, IL

IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding015.tif	Ornamental detailing, northwest corner
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding016.tif	Ornamental detailing, east facade
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding017.tif	Typical bay, north facade
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding018.tif	Typical bay and Diversey Avenue main entrance, north facade
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding019.tif	Detail, typical window, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding020.tif	Detail, typical opening, lower level
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding021.tif	Entry door, east facade
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding022.tif	Loading docks, west facade
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding023.tif	Detail, rooftop tower
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding024.tif	Interior, lower level
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding025.tif	Interior, first floor
IL_CookCounty_VassarSwissUnderwearCompanyBuilding026.tif	Neighborhood view, looking south and west to Vassar Swiss building

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

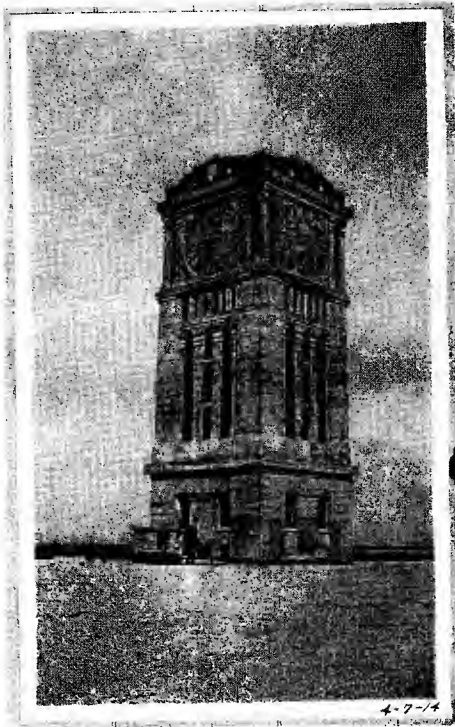
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**Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Chicago, Cook County, IL**

HISTORIC IMAGES



Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Tower,  
1914  
Munsingwear Corporate Records, Box 32,  
148.C.143B, Minnesota Historical Society,  
Minneapolis, MN

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**Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
Chicago, Cook County, IL**



NEW PLANT OF VASSAR SWISS UNDERWEAR CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

Illustration,  
Vassar Swiss  
Underwear  
Company  
Building, ca.  
1913.  
148, C143BITEM  
2. Munsingwear  
Corporate  
Records,  
Minnesota  
Historical  
Society,  
Minneapolis,  
MN.



**BAUM BROTHERS, L.L.C.**  
Real Estate Development

Patrick Andrus  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye St., NW  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, DC 20005

**RE: Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building  
2545 West Diversey Avenue, Chicago, Illinois**

Dear Mr. Andrus:

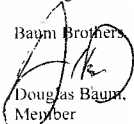
As owner, I object to the listing of the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building at 2545 W. Diversey Avenue on the National Register of Historic Places.

Please confirm the nomination has been pulled. If you require any further information please contact Joan Dahlquist at 312.275.3124 or [joan@baumdevelopment.com](mailto:joan@baumdevelopment.com)

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Best regards,

Baum Brothers, L.L.C

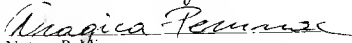


Douglas Baum,  
Member

STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
) ss.  
COUNTY OF COOK )

I, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said County and State aforesaid, DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that Douglas BAUM MEMBER of BAUM BRAS. L.L.C. personally known to me to be the same person whose name subscribed to the forgoing instrument, appeared before me this day in person and acknowledged that he signed and delivered the said instrument as his free and voluntary act, for the uses and purposes therein set forth, including the release and waiver of the right of homestead.

Given under my hand and official seal, this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of August, 2007.

  
Notary Public

cc: Andrew Heckenkamp, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Ted Hild, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Victoria Granacki, Granaeki Historic Consultants



ARKANSAS, JEFFERSON COUNTY,  
St. Louis Southwestern Railway (Cotton Belt Route) Relief Train,  
1700 Port Rd.,  
Pine Bluff, 07000471,  
LISTED, 5/25/07

COLORADO, ROUTT COUNTY,  
Christian Science Society Building,  
641 Oak St.,  
Steamboat Springs, 07000839,  
LISTED, 8/22/07

CONNECTICUT, NEW LONDON COUNTY,  
Lord, Capt. Enoch, House,  
17 Tantummaheag Rd.,  
Old Lyme, 07000418,  
LISTED, 5/16/07

FLORIDA, VOLUSIA COUNTY,  
Turnbull Canal System,  
Address Restricted,  
New Smyrna Beach, 07000840,  
LISTED, 8/24/07  
(Archeological Resources of the 18th-Century Smyrnea Settlement of Dr. Andrew Turnbull MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,  
Vassar Swiss Underwear Company Building,  
2545 W. Diversey Ave.,  
Chicago, 07000859,  
DETERMINED ELIGIBLE, 8/22/07

ILLINOIS, SANGAMON COUNTY,  
Illinois State Fairgrounds,  
Jct. of Sangamon Ave. and Peoria Rd.,  
Springfield, 90000720,  
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 8/23/07  
(Historic Fairgrounds in Illinois MPS)

KENTUCKY, KNOTT COUNTY,  
Hindman Ben Franklin,  
16 W. Main St.,  
Hindman, 07000675,  
LISTED, 8/23/07

MICHIGAN, BERRIEN COUNTY,  
Union Block,  
114 E. Front St.,  
Buchanan, 07000746,  
LISTED, 8/22/07

MICHIGAN, WAYNE COUNTY,  
Wardell, The,  
15 E. Kirby Ave.,  
Detroit, 07000744,